# Memoirs of Fascinating Mme. Steinheil Abound in Mystery and Adventure

Mme. Steinheil

M. de Vallee
THE JUDGE

Maitre A. Aubin,
MME STEINHEIL'S COUNSEL.

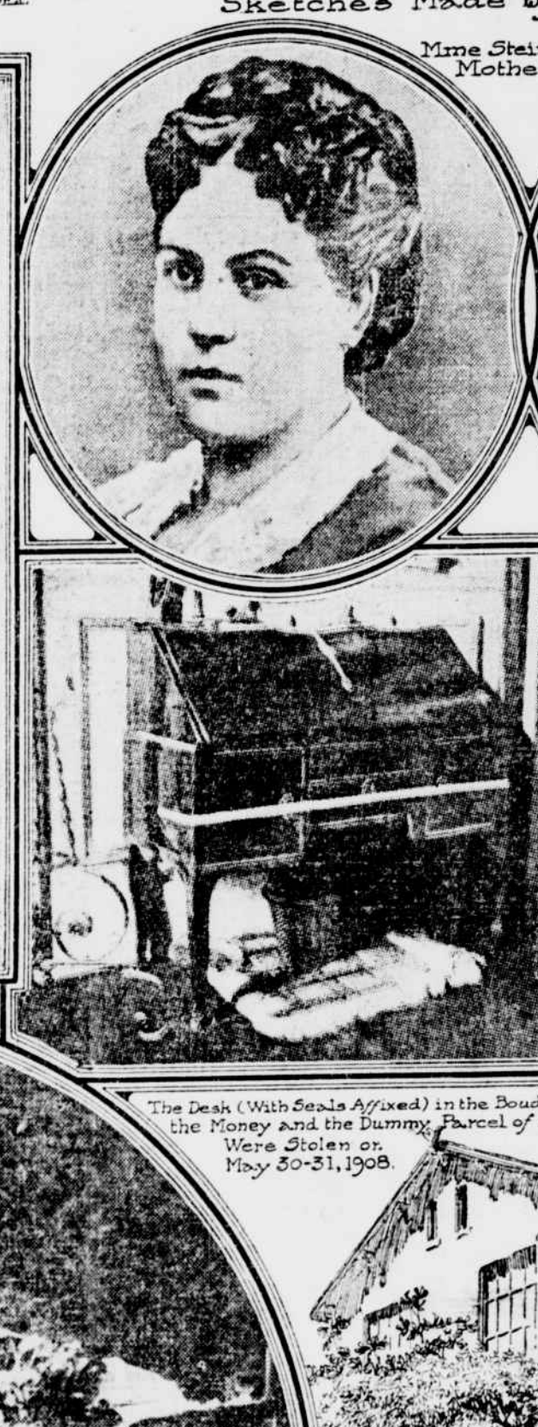
M. Trouard Riolle
THE ADVOCATE-GENERAL

M. de Balincourt

Remy Couillard.

Sketches Made by Mme Steinheil

Mme. Steinheil in the Prison Yard at Saint Lazare.



Mme Steinheil's Mother.

Mme Steinheil's Husband in 1898.



The Desk (With Seals Affixed) in the Boudoir, from Which the Money and the Dummy Parcel of Documents Were Stolen on May 30-31, 1908.

Mme. Steinheil Writing Her Memoirs

The Gold Box in Which President Faure Sent Mme. Steinheil the Pearl Necklace



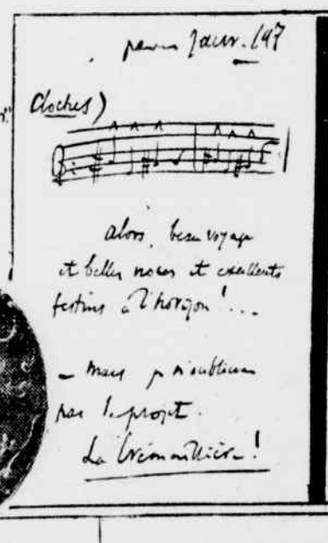
President Felix Faure

Mme Steinheil and Daughter in 1901.

M André. The Examining Magistrate



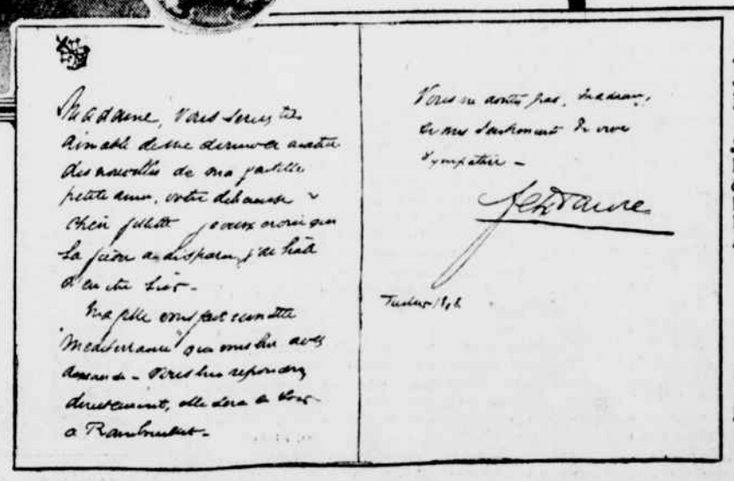
The House in the Impasse Ronsin.



The Felix Faure "Talisman"



A Letter Sent to Mme. Steinheil by Massenet in 1907 and Signed – "Your Devoted, Faithful, Obedient, Respectful and Punctual Accompanist."



A Letter from Felix Faure to Mme. Steinheil

## "Heroine" of Paris Imbroglios Gives Her Own Story of Scandals and Crimes to the World.

EVENTS pass rapidly in these days, and are quickly forgotten. The French Panama Canal scandal is already ancient history. One must make an effort to recall the Wilson affair under the Presidency of his father-in-law, Jules Grévy. Dust is settling even on the records of the "affair" that set all France by the ears and enlisted the partisanship of all civilization—the Dreyfus case. We were reminded of it only the other day by the fact that Captain Dreyfus's son had just entered the army. The Fashoda incident, contemporary with this great army scandal, has left no ripple of its wild excitement, and Mme. Humbert lies entirely forgotten in her grave. Events do pass rapidly, especially in the French Republic.

Some of these events, the Dreyfus case and the Fashoda imbroglio especially, are recalled to mind by Mme. Steinheil's "My Memoirs," which are to be published immediately in this country by the Sturgis & Walton Company.

### MURDERS IN THE IMPASSE RONSIN

It may be well, in view of the ease and rapidity with which the world forgets nowadays, to recapitulate the main points of this "cause célèbre," a common double murder for the sake of robbery on the surface, but below it fraught with all the dangers of still another exposure of rank corruption in the highest circles of the French government.

On the morning of May 31, 1908, Rémy Couillard, the man-servant in the household of M. and Mme. Steinheil in the Impasse Ronsin, Paris, found his mistress tied hand and foot to her bed, and with a rope around her neck that might easily have caused strangulation. He called for help, further investigation showing that Steinheil himself, a fairly well known painter, had been strangled in an adjoining room, while, finally, Mme. Japy, Mme. Steinheil's mother, was found in a third room, done to death in the same manner.

Mme. Steinheil, the only survivor of what had evidently been a triple attempt at assassination, told a circumstantial story of having been awakened in the night by three men and a woman, who tied her and ordered her to reveal the hiding place of her money and jewels. The men, she said, were dressed in long, black garments of a peculiar shape, and wore no less peculiar felt hats, with broad brims and peaked crowns. The woman was red haired and wore a dark cloak. The quartet used two dark lanterns, so that their victim had but an indistinct view of them. Mme. Steinheil told the burglars where her valuables were hidden, was gagged, and fainted. Of the fate of her husband and mother she was unaware until told later in the day.

The police set to work and found a clew. The peculiar dark garments, it was proved, had been stolen in the evening before the murders from a Jewish theatre in Paris, which had rented them from a costumer. They were gabardines, the coats prescribed by law in the Middle Ages for Jews. The hats completing these costumes had also been taken from the theatre, together with the woman's cloak. The clew led nowhere, however. The criminals were not found, neither were the stolen garments recovered. The police continued their investigations, but apparently without results. Paris openly expressed the opinion that the government wanted the case dropped and forgotten for fear of an official scandal of the first magnitude. Mme. Steinheil's relations with many influential men in public life had long been notorious, especially her intimacy with President Félix Faure, with whose sudden and mysterious death her name had been connected in a sinister manner.

At first no official suspicion was entertained of Mme. Steinheil's possible guilt of the murder of her husband and mother, but Paris, remembering the circumstances of Faure's death, was of a different opinion. Mme. Steinheil herself, well aware of the trend of public opinion, was indefatigable in her visits to the heads of the Police Department, constantly ready with new suggestions, and insistent in her demands that the criminals should be brought to justice. She appealed to the Paris press for assistance in the matter, then, in November, 1908, brought an accusation against the servant Couillard and against the son of her cook, Alexandre Wolff, implicating Mme. Wolf, an old and trusted servant, as an accessory before the fact. The evidence against Couillard consisted of a pearl from one of Mme. Steinheil's stolen rings, which was found in his pocketbook. She admitted later that she had placed it there herself, in order to frighten him into a confession.

The accused persons were promptly discharged from custody, but by this time Mme. Steinheil had involved herself in such a network of falsehoods and contradictions, especially in connection with the stolen jewelry, which yet was found to be still in her possession, that suspicion was fully directed against her. On the night of November 25, 1908, she confessed her complicity in the murder, and was arrested, subsequently retracting the confession. Her trial was not begun until November of the following year, and ended in her acquittal.

This is, in brief, the story of the "Steinheil case," which was conducted with brutal frankness so far as a general exposure of the woman's immoral life was concerned, but with extreme circumspection whenever it threatened to touch upon her relations with several magistrates, and, most of all, with the deceased President of the Republic. Marguerite Steinheil was shown to be the latest of a long line of historic French courtesans, whose opportunities would have been infinitely greater had she lived under an emperor or a king. One of her minor troubles was a study of her as a typical case of degeneration published by the late Professor Lombroso. He compared her with Phryne.

Mme. Steinheil's autobiography, for this is what her book is, is an able piece of work. Written with great apparent frankness, so far as her own mode of life is concerned, it has, at the same time, certain reticences, notably in her suppression of the names of all but the greatest of her lovers in the government and the magistrature. It explains many things that mystified the prosecution and the world at large, but, on the other hand, adds some new mysteries to the case, which certainly give the book all the qualities of a first rate detective story—minus the solution. These new mysteries will be touched upon later on. It may be well here to review briefly Mme. Steinheil's own account of her childhood and marriage.

Marguerite Japy was born on April 16, 1869, at Beaucourt, a village near Belfort and the German and Swiss frontiers. Her father was a rich man, the son of a manufacturer, her mother the daughter of an innkeeper at Montbéliard. Mme. Steinheil pictures the home life of her parents and her own childhood as an idyl of love, happiness and innocence. Lombroso, on the other hand, who, no doubt, drew his data from the investigations of the French Department of Justice, had it that both parents were gross sensualists and addicted to alcoholic excesses, holding them responsible for the precocious depravity of which Mme. Steinheil was accused. There was also mention of an illegitimate child born to her in her teens.

In July, 1890, Marguerite Japy married Alexandre Steinheil, a man nearly twenty years her senior, a painter of some merit, but of a retiring disposition, which prevented him from shouldering his way upward in the world. He was a nephew of Meissonier, and poor. The young couple settled in Paris, the wife, according to her own account, beginning at once to advance her husband's material interests in every possible way. Eleven months later their daughter and only child was born. Mme. Steinheil leaving the conjugal roof shortly afterward on account of some offence on her husband's part, which she does not specify, but leaves to the reader's imagination. She consented, however, to a formal reconciliation for the sake of their child, at the request of M. B., "a famous barrister and attorney general," who appears to have been the first of the bewilderingly long succession of her elderly, rich and influential friends.

### HER SALON.

Though separated from her husband in fact, Mme. Steinheil continued to reside with him, and to advance their common material fortunes. Young, handsome, intelligent, an interesting talker, a gifted singer and pianist, she succeeded in attracting to her drawing rooms the leading celebrities of Paris, government officials, painters, composers, sculptors, poets, authors, distinguished foreigners, rich nobles and manufacturers. The women who visited her were not always all that they ought to be, but, like their hostess, they kept their social footing, and, she adds, none of them was ever dull. She tells many anecdotes of these men of achievement who were attracted by her brilliancy and beauty. Of the aged Bonnat, who called himself her "faithful Methuselah," she draws an attractive picture. The Alsatian Henner remained to the end of his days the uncouth Alsatian peasant. He was not only untidy, but physically unclean; his passion for fresh tints led him

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